

Department of Human Services

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Published November 2, 2006

Decision on Ricky's body expected soon

Ongoing probe a factor in next move by officials

By Kevin Grasha
Lansing State Journal

What's next

- Lisa Holland, who was convicted last week of first-degree felony murder and first-degree child abuse, is scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 28 to life in prison without the possibility of parole.
- A sentencing hearing for Tim Holland, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, is scheduled for Nov. 15.

Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunnings III said Wednesday he expects to take action next week that could finally determine what happens to Ricky Holland's body.

The county medical examiner's office has held the 7-year-old boy's skeletal remains as evidence since January.

Lisa Holland was convicted last week of murder and child abuse in Ricky's July 2005 death. Her husband, Tim, pleaded guilty in September to second-degree murder.

Tim Holland's relatives, who are caring for the couple's four other children - three of whom are Ricky's biological siblings - have requested the remains but have been told no decision has been made.

Dunnings said the ongoing investigation into whether anyone else could be charged in Ricky's death is a factor in determining whether the remains are released.

Authorities have interviewed Lisa Holland's parents, Tom and Betty Taylor of Williamston, in their continuing investigation into Ricky's death. During the trial, Tom Taylor did not testify, invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

Dunnings added that an appeal of the verdict, which he expects, also could affect what happens.

"I'm not in a position to make any definitive statements," he said Wednesday. "I hope to be in that position by the end of next week."

Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Dean Sienko said his office is waiting for the legal process to resolve.

"I'm waiting for the legal system to give me the go-ahead and assist me in deciding who is the appropriate person to represent next-of-kin," he said.

Sienko said people who want to help should focus on children now involved in abusive situations.

"One of the things we can do in Ricky's memory," he said, "is to address more intensively our fight against child abuse."

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or kgrasha@lsj.com.



Rose's parents enter plea, face Dec. 14 sentencing

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, November 02, 2006

By Paul Janczewski

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FLINT - Michelle L. Bowen and Jeffrey C. Kelley held hands as they stood before a judge and pleaded to involuntary manslaughter for neglecting to get medical help for their malnourished and lice-infected daughter.

Rose M. Kelley, 5, died June 3 in the couple's home at 1606 N. Franklin Ave.

Sick for five days and unable to stand, court records indicate all the little girl wanted was to drink pop and sleep.

She had not been taken to a doctor because her parents feared she and three other children would be taken from them, officials said.

Now, with Rose dead and her three siblings taken away by court order, Bowen and Kelley pleaded no contest to the manslaughter charge. The plea is not an admission of guilt but is treated as such at sentencing.

The Oakland County medical examiner ruled Rose Kelley's death a homicide and said she died from liver failure compounded by neglect. Police also said that medical experts believe Rose would have survived if she had been given medical attention.

Genesee Probate Judge Robert E. Weiss scheduled a Dec. 14 sentencing date for the couple, who face up to 17 months in prison in a plea deal with prosecutors.

Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton was prepared to charge them with second-degree murder, but agreed to the manslaughter charge in exchange for their pleas.

"I feel sorry for Rose and all the other children living in squalor in our community," Leyton said after the short hearing. "We need to do a better job of identifying these cases and helping these children get out of their abuse and neglect."

Bowen, 32, and Kelley, 34, stood near their attorneys for parts of the hearing.

At other times, they sat in chairs. Bowen cried and sat with her head down, rocking back and forth, while Kelley, her fiance, sat silent and still.

Police were called to the residence about 11:15 a.m. June 3 and found Rose lying in the middle of the living room floor, her tiny, bony fists clenched tight. Police found a pot nearby that Rose used to vomit in. The pot and her scalp were covered in lice, police reports said.

Department of Human Services officials had ordered Rose's parents to take parenting classes in 2004 and receive "prevention services" in 2005 after allegations that another child in the home had been medically neglected, according to a court petition.

The two youngest, ages 2 and 6, are the children of Kelley and Bowen, while the eldest daughter, 10, was

the child of Bowen and another man. Prosecutors said earlier that all the children are thriving in foster care.

Bowen and Kelley remain free on a \$10,000 personal bond.

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Rose Kelley's parents plead no contest to involuntary manslaughter in her death

FLINT

04 FJ MLIVEONLY

Wednesday, November 01, 2006

By Paul Janczewski

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FLINT - The parents of Rose Marie Kelley, the 5-year-old girl who died in squalor five months ago, pleaded no contest to involuntary manslaughter today in family court.

Jeffrey C. Kelley, 34, and Michelle L. Bowen, 32, held hands at the podium while entering the pleas before Genesee Probate Judge Robert E. Weiss.

Both could receive up to 17 months in prison when they go before Weiss for sentencing on Dec. 14.

Rose died in squalor and filth in their east-side Flint home June 3 after being ill for several days. Authorities said her parents didn't seek medical attention for her.

Bowen and Kelley agreed to plead no contest to the manslaughter charges after Genesee County Prosecutor David S. Leyton agreed to recommend that Weiss use sentencing guidelines calling for no more than 17 months in prison or jail.

Bowen had earlier rejected a deal with prosecutors and vowed to fight to regain custody of her three other children. She later relented, giving up her parental rights and accepting the plea deal.

Kelley also agreed to surrender his parental rights.

Those children - two younger siblings, who were 2 and 6 when Rose died, and a half-sister, who was 10 - were placed in foster care.

The two youngest are the children of Kelley and Bowen, while the eldest daughter was the child of Bowen and a Flint man named Jeffery Mitchell. Prosecutors said the children are thriving in foster care.

Bowen cried, hung her head and rocked back and forth in her chair during the hearing today.

Weiss said she and Kelley will be allowed to remain free on bond until the sentencing hearing.

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Article published Nov 2, 2006

Day care director charged for not reporting abuse

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

A Westland woman who runs a child care center in Plymouth Township is being charged with failing to report signs of abuse on a Canton toddler who eventually died while in the care of her foster mother.

Jacqueline Hadwin, 36, director of Childtime Learning Center, faces 93 days in jail or a fine of not more than \$500, or both, if convicted of misdemeanor failure to report suspected child abuse. Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy announced the charges Monday.

The charges stem from the death of 2-year-old Allison Newman, the Canton girl who died Sept. 22, a death the Wayne County medical examiner ruled was caused by head trauma. Carol Poole, Allison's foster mother, has been charged with felony murder, child abuse and involuntary manslaughter in the case.

The state closed Childtime last month after two witnesses came forward to say they'd reported their suspicions of child abuse to supervisors at the center. On Monday, Worthy announced the charges against Hadwin.

Hadwin was arraigned Monday before 35th District Court Judge Ron Lowe. She was given a \$1,000 personal bond and is scheduled for a preliminary hearing Nov. 20.

"Deciding on child care, particularly for a young child, is one of the most stressful, time-consuming, and important decisions that a parent makes," Worthy said in announcing the charges. "And still you always worry if your child is safe. It is critical that all child care providers strictly follow reporting laws. Perhaps if this had been done, little Allison might be alive today."

In a statement released Monday, Childtime officials called the charges "surprising," but vowed to "continue to cooperate with all the appropriate authorities."

"Everyone at Childtime takes their responsibility of being mandated reporters very seriously. While child abuse is a rare but sad reality, we have never hesitated to notify the appropriate authorities when we suspected that a child might have been in danger," the statement read.

"In fact, we have promptly reported suspicions of abuse and neglect both in Michigan -- and around the country -- in those cases where it was warranted."

Poole, scheduled for a Nov. 13 preliminary hearing in 35th District Court, faces a mandatory life sentence if convicted on the felony murder. Involuntary manslaughter carries a maximum 15-year penalty.

November 2, 2006

Day care director arraigned

<http://www.journalgroup.com/index.php?id=1797>

Kevin Hill
Staff Writer



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Jacqueline Dorothy Hadwin

Prosecutors said Monday that a day care director could have helped save the life of a Canton Township toddler.

Jacqueline Dorothy Hadwin, 36, of Westland, turned herself in to Canton police on Monday after she was charged with failure to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child. The child in question, Allison Newman, died Sept. 22 of severe head trauma. Carol Poole, the foster mother in care of Newman, is charged with felony murder, involuntary manslaughter and child abuse.

The police investigation into Newman's death led to a former employee at Childtime who said she had reported seeing bruises on Newman and that those reports were not relayed to Child Protective Services by the director, as required by law.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) shut down the facility on Helm Street on Oct. 16 after conducting its own investigation.

The charge against Hadwin is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 93 days in jail or a

\$500 fine, or both. She is out on a personal \$1,000 bond and due back at the 35th District Court for a pre-trial hearing on Nov. 20.

“Childtime was surprised and saddened to hear that the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office has decided to file charges against Jacqueline Hadwin,” the company said in a statement. “Everyone at Childtime takes their responsibility of being mandated reporters very seriously.”

Center spokesperson Amy Popp said the center was appealing the DHS decision to suspend the center license.

“It’s obviously upsetting to us,” Popp said. “We are continuing to cooperate with authorities.”

Popp would not disclose the status of Hadwin’s employment with Childtime, but said that Hadwin is not currently in a capacity caring for children. She added that Hadwin continues to deny the allegations and has retained independent counsel.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy put the charges against Hadwin in stark terms.

“It is critical that all childcare providers strictly follow reporting laws. Perhaps if this had been done, little Allison might be alive today,” she said.

According to Pomorski, Canton police investigators interviewed several people about the suspected abuse.

“More than one person reported their suspicions to the director as to what they saw on Allison Newman,” said Pomorski.

Parents of children enrolled at the Plymouth facility were referred to other Childtime locations or other day care providers in the area.



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Parents face felony charges

4-month-old son has multiple bone fractures

Thursday, November 02, 2006

A couple was arraigned Wednesday on felony charges that they abused their 4-month-old son, who was brought to a hospital this week with 10 broken bones.

Christopher Bunge, 22, is charged with first-degree child abuse, and Christina Burke, 19, is charged with second-degree child abuse. First-degree child abuse is punishable by up to 15 years in prison, and second-degree child-abuse carries a maximum sentence of four years in prison.

Ann Arbor Police said the couple brought the baby to the University of Michigan Medical Center on Monday night because of a swollen foot, and doctors discovered many fractured bones in various stages of healing. The infant was hospitalized with fractures to his arms, legs and ribs and a fractured skull.

The baby is the first child for Bunge and Burke, and police said they admitted they had been rough with him. State social workers also are investigating.

Bunge and Burke remain jailed on \$100,000 bond each. A preliminary hearing was set for next Wednesday.

- By Staff Reporter Amalie Nash

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ClickOnDetroit.com

Couple Charged With Child Abuse Of 4-Month-Old

POSTED: 6:23 pm EST November 1, 2006
UPDATED: 7:01 pm EST November 1, 2006

A 4-month-old boy is recovering after doctors at the University of Michigan Hospital reported the child had been abused.

Doctors said the little boy came into the hospital with 10 broken bones including arms, legs and skull fracture and other evidence of abuse.

The parents could not explain the injuries, according to police.

The child's parents, Christopher Edward Bunge, 22 and Christina Burke, 19 were charged Wednesday with several counts of child abuse, according to the prosecutor's office.

A neighbor told Local 4 she saw the baby Saturday night and he was fine.

Doctors said the little boy is in good condition and is expected to recover.

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Article published Nov 2, 2006

Nigerian woman accused of beating daughter, 6

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Nigerian woman living illegally in the United States was charged Monday with abusing her 6-year-old daughter in Westland by tying her up and beating her with cords and sticks.

Onyinyechi Joy Ogundu, 25, also was accused of abusing the girl by forcing her to stand in difficult positions, such as balancing on her left foot while leaning forward and putting her right index finger on the floor, police Sgt. Debra Mathews said.

Ogundu also was accused of tying a scarf around the girl's head at her mouth while abusing her at Woodcrest Villa Apartments, near Wayne Road south of Joy, Mathews said.

Ogundu was arraigned Monday in front of Westland 18th District Judge Gail McKnight on charges of second- and third-degree child abuse.

A not-guilty plea was entered for her.

Ogundu was jailed in lieu of a \$50,000 cash bond as she awaits a preliminary hearing that will determine whether she should stand trial.

Allegations surfaced against Ogundu after employees at Garfield Elementary School in Livonia became suspicious that the first-grade girl was being abused, Mathews said.

According to court documents, the girl was abused from August 2005 through October 2006.

The girl has been placed in a foster home. She was described as quiet-spoken and well-behaved.

"She's bright, she's sweet and she's very respectful," Mathews said. Ogundu, who has no green card, could face penalties ranging up to four years in prison if convicted of abusing the girl. She then would be turned over to immigration officials for possible deportation, Mathews said.

The girl's father wasn't living in the apartment.

Ogundu was accused in court documents of causing "serious physical or mental harm" to the girl.

Wayne Briefs

Detroit News

November 2, 2006

Dearborn Heights

Abuse case dropped against ex-bus driver

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy on Wednesday dismissed the case against former full-time Crestwood School District bus driver Yvonne Meader, who was accused of leaving an autistic boy, 5, alone on an empty school bus in a bus yard in Livonia on Nov. 23, 2005. Meader, 45, of Dearborn Heights was originally charged with second-degree child abuse, but the penalty was reduced to fourth-degree child abuse on July 26. The boy was treated for hypothermia.

ClickOnDetroit.com

Police: Duct-Taped Toddlers Found Alone, In Feces

Mother Accused Of Taping Children, Leaving Them Alone

POSTED: 2:40 am EST November 1, 2006

UPDATED: 6:41 am EST November 1, 2006

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Authorities allege a woman duct-taped her 3-year-old and 4-year-old sons together and left them alone while she went to work.

Agla Vincent, 25, was charged with child abuse after a seven-month investigation.

Police said the incident took place while the family was living on base at the Naval Air Station-Jacksonville in March.

Vincent was a naval officer at the time at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station. A spokesman said she completed her service and was discharged in August.

Police reports state a witness heard the children screaming and crying inside Vincent's home , and six hours later returned to the house and found a toddler in a soaked diaper with duct tape on his leg.

"The parent was not able to be located. They (the witness) put the child in the unlocked apartment and notified the military police," said Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Lt. Annie Smith.

Investigators said that 48 minutes later, when military police arrived and entered the home, they found the children duct taped to each other around the lower legs as they lay crying on their bed. They were in a bedroom with feces and cereal scattered on play mats on the floor, police said.

The officer who came to investigate said once he found the children, Vincent came running into the room, jumped on the bed and ripped the duct off with her teeth.

Vincent was arrested and her two children were placed in custody of the state.

The military took over the investigation. Vincent posted bond and was let out of jail.

Although she was initially arrested by military police, seven months later, Vincent is in the Duval County Jail as a civilian.

"Miss Vincent recently ended her military commitment, and that's when Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and the State Attorney's Office took over jurisdiction of the case," Smith said.

Vincent posted \$5,000 bond on Tuesday evening and was released from jail.

Vincent has denied leaving her sons home alone.

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Agla Vincent

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Judge to take new look at teacher's sex case

BY L.L. BRASIER and JOHN WISELY

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

November 2, 2006

An Oakland County judge agreed Wednesday to review the child sex-abuse conviction of an Oak Park kindergarten teacher after his attorney argued that such an attack could not have occurred as his accusers described it.

Judge Denise Langford Morris said she needed more time to review trial transcripts and examine new evidence gathered after the September conviction of James Perry, 32, before deciding how to proceed. She postponed indefinitely Perry's sentencing hearing, which had been scheduled for Nov. 9.

Although Perry's lawyer expressed optimism, Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorcyca criticized the defense and the Free Press, which published a report Wednesday on new information that raised questions about Perry's conviction.

Gorcyca said on "The Frank Beckmann Show" on WJR-AM (760) that the Free Press article was "full of falsehoods, distorted facts. It's completely lopsided." His office did not return calls Wednesday from the Free Press seeking comment.

Perry's attorneys are requesting that the judge either overturn the verdict or grant a new trial.

Morris said she would try to rule on the motions promptly, given that Perry remains in the Oakland County Jail. If the verdict stands, Perry faces up to life in prison on charges of sexually assaulting two kindergarten boys at Key Elementary.

Perry was led into the somber courtroom with his wrists shackled to his waist. The judge allowed him to sit with his attorneys and ordered a deputy to uncuff one hand to allow him to take notes.

She agreed to review the case -- involving boys who were 4 and 5 when they said they were attacked in an empty classroom at lunch in October 2005 -- after listening to more than an hour of heated arguments. The courtroom was packed with more than 30 supporters of the former teacher.

Appellate defense lawyer Robyn Frankel said afterward that she was satisfied with the judge's willingness to review the case: "She wants to protect the rights of all parties."

The Free Press article noted significant discrepancies in the boys' accounts and included interviews with school staffers who never were interviewed by police.

The classroom aides worked in the special-education room at Key Elementary, where prosecutors -- and the boys -- told jurors the attacks took place. The aides contend the classroom was always occupied at lunch and the attacks could not have happened there. Neither the aides nor the room's teacher were ever interviewed by police, though the teacher did testify at Perry's trial.

Oakland County Assistant Prosecutor Andrea Dean, the trial prosecutor, argued in court Wednesday that prosecutors aren't required to prove a precise time and location in a sex crime, but only that it happened within their jurisdiction.

"The People don't have to prove their theory, only that on or about Oct. 12 the crime was committed in Oakland County," Dean said. "We've proven that."

Dean also argued that the aides' testimony would be redundant because the special-education teacher -- Clara Geary -- had offered similar testimony to jurors.

"The defendant doesn't like the result and he wants this court to be the 13th juror," Dean argued in court. "Why could this not happen the way these kids describe it? Because the defendant doesn't like the verdict and the liberal media doesn't like the verdict."



James Perry, 32, was convicted of sexually abusing two boys. (HUGH GRANNUM/Detroit Free Press)

Gorcyca, in the radio interview, argued that discrepancies in aspects of the boys' accounts did not detract from their core testimony.

"They never, ever, ever wavered," he said. "Not from the interview, not at the district court level and not at trial regarding the acts of sexual molestation. Now, do 4- and 5-year-olds sometimes get ancillary facts confused? Yes, but when it came down to the actual facts of molestation, never wavered once."

In an interview with the Free Press last week, prosecutors insisted the case was sound because the boys consistently described the attacks themselves, despite discrepancies about time and location.

"The kids were consistent throughout on the traumatic acts," Gorcyca said.

But a Free Press review found that trial testimony and witness statements to police showed inconsistent accounts of what allegedly happened.

The 5-year-old boy gave an account to police that differed significantly from an account his mother gave to police, based on her conversations with the boy. The 4-year-old denied being sexually assaulted during one interview with authorities, but later claimed that he was. Experts say it's not unusual for young children to offer differing details of such accounts because they sometimes have trouble distinguishing truth from fiction.

Gorcyca and Dean also argued in the Free Press interview that evidence excluded from the trial also points to guilt. During a previous contact Perry had with police, Oak Park Detective Erik Dolan questioned Perry about videotaping in an Oak Park neighborhood in February 2003.

Perry provided him the tape. It showed homes in the neighborhood and the remnants of a video Perry had taken inside his classroom of his students' hands and feet. He said it was a game he played with students -- challenging the kindergartners to identify one another based on their hands and feet, according to Dolan's report.

Police determined the behavior to be "unique" but not criminal. Dolan wrote in his report at the time that he reviewed the tape and "found no other unusual activity," according to his report.

However, in a recent interview with the Free Press, Dolan said the tape included other material, such as footage of children playing in front of houses and on playground equipment, which he and Dean said fits the profile of a pedophile. Perry has said he was taping the neighborhood for a presentation he was to make to the school board about housing patterns in the district.

Asked why he didn't include that information in the report he filed at the time, Dolan said it seemed irrelevant. "I didn't feel the need to chronicle every noncriminal activity on the tape," he said during the Free Press interview.

Authorities searched Perry's house after his arrest in February and found no pornography. They seized videos, including "The Lion King" and "Harry Potter" -- materials that prosecutors, outside the jury's presence, portrayed as being "nonerotic pornography."

Perry was returned to the Oakland County Jail after Wednesday's hearing.

In addition to the criminal case, there is a civil lawsuit pending, filed by the mother of one of the boys against the Oak Park School District and Perry. That case is before another Oakland County Circuit Court judge, Deborah Tyner.

Contact **L.L. BRASIER** at 248-858-2262 or brasier@freepress.com.

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November 2, 2006

Judge reviews assault case

Sentencing of Oak Park teacher is delayed as his conviction on two sexual attacks gets re-examined.

Mike Martindale / The Detroit News

PONTIAC -- An Oakland County circuit judge said Wednesday she would "review everything" in the case of an Oak Park school teacher who has been convicted of sexually assaulting two young boys at the school.

Judge Denise Langford Morris made the statement after appeals attorney Robyn Frankel asked that the judge either order an acquittal or a new trial for James Perry. Morris has delayed sentencing until she reviews the case that led to his Sept. 19 conviction.

"Given the nature of assertions and arguments, it necessitates a full review of information including videotaped statements of witnesses ... I am going to have to take the opportunity to review everything," the judge said.

A jury convicted Perry of assaulting the boys, ages 4 and 5, in Oct. 2005.

Frankel told Judge Morris there are several grounds for acquittal or a new trial for Perry, including the young victims' conflicting versions of what happened and how Perry was stigmatized before the jury during trial by wearing an electronic tether, which she described as a "Scarlet Letter."

Frankel also said there was no other eyewitness or physical evidence of the assaults. In addition, late in the trial one special education teacher who was never interviewed by police revealed that two other employees at Key Elementary School also doubt the sexual attacks could ever have taken place as described. The teacher said contrary to earlier reports, the special education classroom was always occupied and supervised.

"What has happened to him is incredible," said Frankel outside the courtroom. "I believe he deserves to be acquitted of the charges, or at least given a new trial and new jury."

Assistant prosecuting attorney Andrea Dean told Morris the jury heard all available evidence and testimony, including from Perry.

And while some testimony may conflict, that doesn't mean the boys weren't assaulted, Dean said.

"People make mistakes people may not remember (everything)," Dean told Morris. "There is nothing to indicate this did not occur as established ..."

Frankel countered to Morris: " 'People make mistakes' -- I'll say. The mistake in this case is the conviction of the man next to my left."

Perry, 32, who remains in the Oakland County Jail, was scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 9 for first-degree criminal sexual conduct. The boys have said they were pulled out of a lunch line by Perry and taken to an empty special ed room and assaulted.

In subsequent interviews with police and court testimony, the boys gave differing versions of the circumstances and one could not identify Perry in the courtroom.

Outside the courtroom, Frankel noted defendants never sit through a trial in handcuffs or shackles -- unless they have shown to be a threat or escape risk -- or even dressed in jail clothing because it can prejudice a jury against them.

"He sat through the trial wearing an electronic tether with antennae on it for all the jury to see," she said. "But what does that tell a juror?" she asked.

"It tells them someone is considered dangerous and needs to be monitored."

Frankel said if Morris does not rule in Perry's favor, she will file again with the appeals court.

You can reach Mike Martindale at (248) 647-7226 or mmartindale@detnews.com.

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Coach suspected of molesting boy

Birmingham cops say he fled country

BY GINA DAMRON
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

November 2, 2006

Claudio Caffelli, a soccer coach and husband of one of the best-known youth sports entrepreneurs in Oakland County, is being sought by Birmingham police on charges of sexually assaulting a 7-year-old boy, who was a family friend.

Police said Wednesday they believe that Caffelli, 25, flew to Lima, Peru, where his mother lives, to dodge the charges.

Caffelli is the husband of Genevieve Caffelli, who for years has run after-school sports teams for children from preschool age through elementary school. When Claudio Caffelli, a native of Italy, married her a few years ago, he joined her organization to coach soccer, basketball and sometimes flag football.

Police began looking into the accusations against Claudio Caffelli on Oct. 4, after the boy's mother told a police department employee about her suspicions. Charlie Langton, attorney for the Caffelli family, said the boy's mother knew Genevieve Caffelli's family for about 30 years.

A medical professional from Care House in Pontiac talked to the boy at the police department's request and believed an assault had taken place, police said. Investigators interviewed Claudio Caffelli on Oct. 18.

The alleged crimes occurred at the Caffellis' home in Birmingham, Detective Pete Ruby said Wednesday. The boy was not a member of one of Claudio Caffelli's teams, though he does coach boys of that age, police said.

As part of her business Genevieve Caffelli ran Bloomfield Hills Soccer Club's youth soccer academy, where Claudio Caffelli started working about a year ago. According to club officials, both Caffellis submitted their resignations in an e-mail on Oct. 15, citing personal reasons.

The club's statement, released Wednesday, also said that the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association did a background check on Claudio Caffelli and found that during his time with the club, no complaints were ever made about him.

"We think he's more of an opportunist" rather than someone who tried to lure many children into sexual encounters, Ruby said.

Langton said that the couple often babysat the boy because his mother and Genevieve Caffelli "were best of friends." Langton said there are multiple allegations against Claudio Caffelli involving the boy that span from about September 2005 to September 2006.

The child "spent numerous nights at the house," Langton said, adding that the boy's mother allowed the sleepovers because she worked late.

Police took the case to Oakland County prosecutors and on Oct. 26, 48th District Court Judge Diane D'Agostini authorized a warrant for Claudio Caffelli, charging him with three counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct.

But Caffelli -- who Langton said had been trying to become a U.S. citizen -- apparently fled.

Now investigators are pursuing extradition papers. Langton said he doesn't know where Caffelli is. He said Caffelli has maintained he did not assault the child, though Langton acknowledged that his disappearance casts suspicion on him.

"Despite the fact that he's denied these charges, he frankly got scared," Langton said. "For whatever reason, he's not here and that's unfortunate."

Genevieve Caffelli could not be reached for comment Wednesday. Langton said she is staying with a cousin in the Chicago area. He said that she's about three months' pregnant with the couple's first child and has had complications because of stress.



Claudio Caffelli

"To say she's depressed and sickened by this is an understatement," Langton said.

Langton said that Claudio Caffelli's friends and family members were shocked by the allegations.

"It is completely unlike anything that Claudio would ever do," he said, adding that Caffelli loved living in Michigan. "He has a good job. He was happy. His life was good."

*Police request that anyone with information about Caffelli call them at 248-644-3405 anytime or call Ruby's line at 248-644-1800, extension 218, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays. Contact **GINA DAMRON** at 248-351-3293 or gdamron@freepress.com*

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Police: Man Allegedly Sexually Assaults 7-Year-Old Boy

Man Possibly Fled Country

POSTED: 11:29 am EST November 1, 2006

Birmingham police are involved in an international search for a man who they said sexually assaulted a 7-year-old boy.

On Oct. 4, a concerned parent contacted the Birmingham police Department, telling them she believed her 7-year-old son had been sexually assaulted. A child forensic interviewer questioned the boy, who detailed several sex acts that took place, according to the Birmingham Police Department.

The man the boy singled out in each alleged assault is Claudio Luigi Caffelli, 25, whose last known address is 2281 W. Lincoln St. in Birmingham.

Caffelli denied all allegations, and when the case was turned over to the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office on Oct. 26, warrants were issued, according to police.

Officials believe that Caffelli has fled the country. Caffelli's cell phone provider used a GPS tracking device that traced Caffelli's line to Peru.

Caffelli, who is originally from Italy, has coached a youth soccer team in the area for years, but according to police, he met the boy through family friends.

Caffelli is charged with three separate counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, each count carrying a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Anyone with information should call the Birmingham Police Department at 248-644-3405 ext. 218.

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Molester gets 9 months in jail

Thursday, November 02, 2006

By Scott Hagen

shagen@citpat.com -- 768-4929

A mother's hysterical sobs were heard echoing from a courtroom hallway Wednesday as the man who molested her daughter was sentenced to jail.

James R. Knapp, a well-known Jackson-area bankruptcy attorney from Jonesville, will spend nine months behind bars for sexually abusing the girl, who was 11 years old at the time.

The mother brought a picture of her daughter to show Circuit Judge Chad Schmucker while she read a statement to the court. She said Knapp looked the daughter in the face when he victimized her, so the judge should be able to look at her face when he passed his sentence.

"She played with dolls and SpongeBob," the mother said in court through tears. "My daughter is a compassionate, wonderful, funny little girl who likes school, horses, cats, making jewelry with beads and playing video games. ! She's innocent, and he took her innocence."

Knapp, 37, apparently befriended the single mother, who is now engaged, and then betrayed the trust he built with the little girl. The girl told Jackson County sheriff's detectives that Knapp took advantage of his alone time with her to grope her and "assist" her in touching his genitals. It continued for a year.

The Citizen Patriot is not naming the mother to protect the child's identity. The newspaper does not name victims of sexual abuse.

"Whenever we have a child victim we have a huge betrayal," Assistant Prosecutor Allison Bates said. "The ramifications whenever a child is molested are lifetime ramifications. The child will be suffering a lifetime of dealing with his trauma."

Knapp and his attorney, Kenneth Hotchkiss, negotiated a plea agreement with prosecutors. The deal hinged on Schmucker sentencing Knapp within the guidelines for fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct, a high-court misdemeanor. He sentenced Knapp to the maximum time he could.

"You are a sick pedophile," the mother said in court. "You are not a man. I wish you nothing but a lifetime of embarrassment and hell."

The mother never heard the sentence. After reading her statement she started yelling at Knapp's parents. A court officer led her from the courtroom as she hurled accusations. She was not held in contempt.

Hotchkiss told the court that Knapp's life is ruined. His law practice folded and he can't support his wife and two children. Knapp has been in jail since he pleaded no contest in September.

Knapp spoke briefly, saying only that he appreciated the support of family and friends. He apologized to the court for putting himself in the position he was in.

"The consequences to Mr. Knapp as a result of this conviction far outweigh what this court can do," Hotchkiss said. "I don't know if there's a real need for any more incarceration."

Knapp must register as a sex offender. He also faces sanctions from the state Attorney Discipline Board, which could revoke his license to practice law.

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Article published Nov 2, 2006

We must all play a role in protecting children

Child safety is and must be the No. 1 priority of school personnel. In previous articles, I wrote about how schools develop crisis plans for emergency situations and for anti-bullying programs. When school personnel suspect that a child is being either neglected or abused, the Child Protection Law comes into play and the teacher, principal, social worker, etc. must report the incident. Sounds pretty cut and dry, doesn't it? Well, I can tell you from experience that some of these situations are the most stressful that a school principal will ever face.

According to Maureen Sorbet, spokesperson for the Michigan Agency of Human Services, 128,854 referrals were made to protective services in Michigan for 2005. Of that number, 72,286 cases were actually investigated. Out of those, 18,101 found evidence that a child was being either neglected or abused. In Oakland County alone, 5,883 cases were investigated. These numbers speak for themselves; child protection is a serious problem.

In the "real world," what does a case look like? It usually starts with the social worker coming into the principal's office with that all-too-familiar look on her face. The look says that something serious has happened and that you better clear your calendar because there will be some significant time devoted to this situation for the rest of the day.

The social worker says that a teacher just told her that that a student has been upset for the better part of the morning. When the teacher asked the student what was wrong, the student said that mom was really angry with her this morning and slapped her on the cheek. The social worker talked with the student and heard the same story. There was also a visible mark on the child's face. The social worker and principal both agree that this situation must be reported to protective services. Usually, the social worker makes the phone call and fills out the required form.

Teachers may make this referral, but usually choose to let the social worker or principal handle it. The teacher may make the referral regardless of what anyone else does. This has to do with who is considered a "mandatory reporter." People under the list include medical personnel, attorneys, police, school personnel, etc, and their failure to make such a report constitutes breaking the law. A mandatory reporter who doesn't report can end up in jail and lose his/her professional license. It's that serious.

Children's Protective Services strongly advises the reporter not to notify the parents when the school makes a referral. The agency wants to be able to investigate the situation without the possible perpetrator forewarned. As you can imagine, many parents become very angry when they receive a visit from a protective services worker with no warning. They feel the school violated a trust and in some cases, there is never a complete healing. Please remember, all this is taking place under suspicion of abuse or neglect. In many cases, a protective service investigator finds no evidence of either abuse or neglect. Parents may actually understand that the school has a duty to perform, but the trust level is never quite the same.

Sometimes, these situations can become violent. A social worker could be working with a family to help with various problems concerning the child. One or both of the parents are not the easiest to deal with. However, the social worker has built some trust and people are actually starting to get help. One day, the child tells the social worker that dad got angry last night and spanked him "really hard." Now what happens? The social worker (and usually the principal) talk the situation over. They have to decide on whether they think the child is telling the truth. You can just imagine what happens if the school refers the case to protective services. I've even had to call the police when a parent found out that a referral was made. Anger was not the word for it. However, the focus must be clear: Child Protective Services is to protect the child, not the school. If the school suspects, it has to report.

Sorbet makes the point that protecting our children is a joint responsibility between the public and the agency. Lots of people come into contact with children every day. Notifying protective services is the responsibility of not only people under the mandatory reporter list, but the general public as well. A next-door neighbor as well as a complete stranger may make a referral when abuse or neglect is suspected. These referrals can actually be done anonymously. The number to call in Oakland County is 248-975-5010. Although it's not easy and sometimes may even seem unfair, adults must do the right thing to protect our children.

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Republicans trying to bolster Walberg's campaign

WASHINGTON -- Republican Tim Walberg seemed to have an easy shot at a congressional seat after he beat a more moderate GOP incumbent in a southern Michigan district that rarely elects Democrats.

But in the closing weeks of the campaign, Walberg's support has remained under 50 percent in polling against his largely unknown Democratic opponent, organic farmer Sharon Renier, while dealing with fallout from a campaign staffer who resigned after facing charges that he struck his 9-year-old foster son.

National Republicans are sending in reinforcements. First Lady Laura Bush is appearing in Battle Creek on Thursday to rally Republicans in the region, more than three weeks after Vice President Dick Cheney headlined a fundraiser in the Lansing area that helped Walberg's campaign.

Walberg is still considered the favorite against Renier, who garnered only 36 percent of the vote in 2004 against Rep. Joe Schwarz and has a limited amount of money. But Republicans say they're taking nothing for granted amid a tough national climate for the party.

"The race is tighter than we wish, but we have 100 percent confidence that Tim Walberg is going to pull it out," said Scott Durham, the Calhoun County GOP chairman.

Walberg beat Schwarz in the August primary, receiving 53 percent of the vote in a race that turned nasty. Walberg, a minister and former state representative, stressed his support for lower taxes, the protection of traditional marriage and anti-abortion views, arguing that Schwarz was too liberal for the district.

The Washington-based Club for Growth, a conservative group, put more than \$1 million into the race in support of Walberg, prompting Schwarz to file a complaint with the Federal Election Commission alleging illegal coordination between the Walberg campaign and the special-interest group. Walberg and Club officials have said the charges are baseless.

Walberg's campaign has also dealt with negative publicity surrounding the arrest of former campaign staff member Daniel Coons. Coons pleaded guilty to domestic violence Sept. 18 over allegations that he struck his 9-year-old foster son in the face in late August.

Coons resigned from the campaign last week. Walberg has said he learned about the incident around Sept. 12 and supported the recommendation by the state's Foster Care Review Board that the family should be reunited.

Renier has criticized Walberg's support for returning the child to the home and said it contradicted Walberg's stated support for family values.

"I just don't know where they think putting a child back into this sort of a situation is any kind of family value," Renier said. She has only raised about \$50,000 during the campaign but started limited cable television advertisements Tuesday.

Walberg campaign manager Joe Wicks said Walberg has a strong record on family issues, including the support of education and a bill in the Legislature to put strobe lights on school buses to protect children.

Walberg was unavailable for comment.

Schwarz has declined to endorse Walberg in the general election, leading some to question whether independent and moderate Republicans may sit out the election or vote for Renier.

Wicks said the campaign was "working hard reaching out to everybody. It's an important race.

It's higher taxes versus lower taxes. It's defending marriage versus not defending marriage."

Polling has been limited in the largely rural district that includes Jackson and Battle Creek. But a noncommissioned survey conducted Oct. 6-8 by Republican pollster Glengariff Group Inc. of Chicago found Walberg with less than 50 percent support and only a slight lead over Renier, who was largely unknown.

A poll commissioned by the Club for Growth found Walberg with a wider lead over Renier, but still below the 50 percent threshold. President Bush won the district with 54 percent in 2004, although he lost the state.

David Keating, executive director of the Club for Growth, said the group felt "pretty confident" about Walberg's prospects.

Pollster Richard Czuba of Glengariff, who conducted polling for Schwarz during the primary, said he conducted the poll after Cheney appeared at a \$150,000 fundraiser in Bath for congressional candidates, with most of the proceeds benefiting Walberg.

"If you're bringing in the vice president, that's a sign that money needs to get raised here _ the campaign needs help," Czuba said.

Ed Patru, a spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee, said the support was to "ensure our candidates have the resources they need to win" and the party was confident it would keep its nine congressional seats in Michigan.

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On the Net:

Tim Walberg for Congress: <http://www.walbergforcongress.com>

Sharon Renier for Congress: <http://www.renier4rep.com>

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Bakker earned 'unblemished' reputation

Wednesday, November 1, 2006 11:22 AM EST

To the editor,

We are writing this letter of support for Margaret Bakker for district court judge from the vantage point of two people that have been eyewitnesses of her milestone-making career.

We were there when Margaret Bakker gathered a group of people, from the services that surrounded victims of domestic abuse, around a table for the first meeting of our Domestic Violence Task Force in 1987. That task force is still intact and provides an avenue and vehicle for law enforcement, the courts, human services, therapists of both victims and batterers, child abuse agencies and clergy to discuss methods, individual cases, if need be, and make improvements.

For nearly 20 years, we have watched progress being made as the Task Force slowly focused on victim's safety and the dynamics of abuse so that we could change the focus away from the victim-"Why doesn't she just leave?"-to a more accurate focus on the perpetrator-"Why does he batter?"-as in all other crime.

It has been a long and slow process and, due to her hard work, perseverance and dedication, positive changes have taken place in the entire system-law enforcement, the courts and the attitudes of our judges toward domestic abuse.

We were there when Marge served on the first committee and became one of the original board members of Sylvia's Place-Allegan County's only emergency shelter serving women and children victims of domestic abuse. This year, Sylvia's Place will celebrate its 10th anniversary and we honestly don't know what we would have done without her assistance.

She also served as past board president for the Center for Women in Transition and on the Lakeshore Council against Domestic and Sexual Abuse-a combination of both Allegan and Ottawa counties.

We were there when Marge gave of her time to conduct training on changes in the law regarding domestic violence and introduced training programs in forensic interviewing for adult and child victims of sexual and physical abuse.

We were there when Marge co-authored a federal grant to establish the position of "Domestic Abuse Prosecutor" so that the cases would have consistency and diligent follow-up and follow-through. It has made all the difference in the world for victims/survivors.

We were there when Marge became involved in the Prevention of child Abuse and Neglect Council-now known as Safe Harbor. She was a board member, president of the

board and a member of the multiagency investigative protocol on multidisciplinary team case review. She is a trainer to those who need to learn forensic interviewing of children.

And, we were there when Marge received the SHERA Award from the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Child Advocate Award from the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Council.

We have watched Marge gradually gain the respect and admiration of law enforcement, attorneys and our county prosecutor over her 24 years here in Allegan County. She has also gained the respect of county officials not only in our county but the surrounding counties as well. She has a fine reputation that has gone unblemished.

We have no reservations about our support for Margaret Bakker for the 57th District Court Judge. We hope that you will vote for her, too.

Mimi Gabriel

Shelly Dietz

Fennville

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Article published Nov 2, 2006

Two Pennfield students suspended after search turns up drugs, gun

**Katie Oliveri
and Trace Christenson**

The Enquirer

Three area students have been suspended from school following incidents of weapon and drug possession on Tuesday.

According to Springfield Department of Public Safety and Calhoun County Juvenile Court officials, Brandon Fields, 13, had an unloaded handgun in his desk at Springfield Middle School and was arrested after officers found a 9 mm in a bathroom about 15 minutes after he showed it to another student in a classroom.

A student told school officials Fields showed him the gun in a desk. When class was over, the student who saw the gun went to school administrators to report the incident and police were called. Fields was suspended for 10 days and could face further discipline.

Also Tuesday, Calhoun County Sheriff deputies said they found a .22-caliber rifle in one student's car and packages of marijuana in another car during a routine search at Pennfield High School.

The 17-year-old student who had the marijuana was arrested on a charge of possession with intent to deliver the drugs.

The 16-year-old student with the .22-caliber rifle was violating the prohibition of having weapons on school property. That case will be discussed with prosecutors.

Both will be investigated by the school. Neither deputies nor school officials would release the names of the students.

Under state law, "if a pupil possesses in a weapon-free school zone a weapon that constitutes a dangerous weapon ... the school board or the designee of the school board ... shall expel the pupil from the school district permanently, subject to possible reinstatement."

The law, however, outlines certain cases where a school board is not required to expel a student for possessing a weapon.

Jane Berger, Springfield Middle School principal, said Wednesday while there has been "obvious concern," parent reaction so far has been generally positive.

Tammi Lawrence, assistant principal, said school officials have monthly meetings with students. There are 452 students in grades 5 through 8 at Springfield.

"Our kids have always been just wonderful about sharing things they think we should know about and are a concern," Lawrence said.

Fields is charged with carrying a concealed weapon and possession of a gun in a weapons-free school zone, according to Mike Boltz, Juvenile Court administrator.

He is being held in the Calhoun County Juvenile Home in Marshall and bond is set at \$40,000. A hearing is scheduled for Nov. 13.

Boltz said Fields was placed on nine months probation in July for resisting police and is awaiting a hearing on a September charge of joy-riding.

Springfield Chief Rob Coles said Wednesday investigators still are trying to determine where Fields obtained the gun. Fields refuses to talk to police about the incident, police said.

In Pennfield, high school principal Barry Duckham said Wednesday both students are "out of school."

He said the length of their suspension or further disciplinary action will be determined pending school board action.

He wouldn't release information about the students or how often the school conducts routine searches. There are about 670 students at Pennfield High School.

"This is rare," Duckham said of Tuesday's findings during the routine search. "We've had many searches. This is really the first time we've found anything of significance over the last five to seven years."

Sheriff deputies said they believed the rifle was for hunting but said the student with the marijuana had packaged the drug as though he was selling it.

Captain Matt Saxton said the sheriff department has been aggressive in its enforcement at Pennfield.

"It's my opinion that it may appear that some of these incidents are occurring more in Pennfield, but they are occurring in all school districts but just not being found."

Katie Oliveri covers education. She can be reached at 966-0589 or koliveri@battlecr.gannett.com. Trace Christenson covers crime and courts. He can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.



State will investigate nursing home incident

Thursday, November 02, 2006

By Ken Kolker

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- The state has opened an investigation into allegations that a terminally ill woman nearly died this week of a drug overdose in a local nursing home.

The state Department of Community Health confirmed that the woman's legal guardian filed a complaint Tuesday against Heartland Health Care Nursing Home, 2320 East Beltline Ave. SE.

"Anything that involves immediate jeopardy or potential harm, we look at it very promptly," state health spokeswoman GERALYN Lasher said.

The Rev. William Lyons, legal guardian for Patricia Corrigan, said he went public about the allegations through the news media after experts told him that an investigation could take months.

"These kind of problems should be corrected as soon as possible so other people won't be jeopardized," Lyons said Wednesday.

Lasher said the investigation would likely take weeks, not months.

Frances Grant, the head of the local Citizens for Better Care, a nursing home watchdog group, said she was "happy to hear" the state would immediately investigate the case.

Recently, investigations have taken three to six months because of budget cuts and staffing shortages, said Grant, the CBC deputy director.

"They're really spread thin," Grant said of state investigators. "We're finding that to be a real challenge."

Lyons, a pastor at St. John's United Church of Christ, said he is removing Corrigan from Heartland.

The nursing home called Lyons on Monday to say the 76-year-old woman, who has terminal lung cancer and suffers from paranoid schizophrenia, was hours from death.

However, Lyons said he questioned whether Corrigan was dying a natural death, based on her symptoms: She was taking only four or five breaths a minute but still had a normal heart rate and normal blood pressure.

He told the home to send her by ambulance to Spectrum Health Butterworth Campus, where her breathing returned to normal after doctors gave her a drug to offset the overdose, Lyons said.

Corrigan is recovering at Butterworth, he said.

Nursing home officials denied giving improper treatment. In a statement, they said an initial investigation showed "that we provided appropriate care and followed the correct physician's orders."

Corrigan initially was treated by Dr. Rudy Ochs, the home's medical director, but he was no longer her physician, Lyons said.

Ochs is awaiting trial on an unrelated charge of covering up the death of a patient at the Metron of Big Rapids nursing home. Authorities say that patient died in January 2005 after her oxygen tank ran empty.

Lyons said he recently requested a new doctor for Corrigan after he disagreed with some of Ochs' orders, which included using physical restraints to control her. She was described as "combative" in court records.

The East Beltline home is part of an Ohio-based chain that includes 14 homes in Michigan. All but three of those homes are on a watchdog group's "national watch list," based on violations uncovered in state inspections.

Send e-mail to the author: kkolker@grpress.com

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Vermont gives seniors more options for care

State pays family, friends to aid them

BY JOHN CURRAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

November 2, 2006

WINOOSKI, Vt. -- At 93, Florence (Tubby) Parsons has a lot going for her. She has her cat, Buddy, the plants in her one-bedroom apartment to tend to and a weekly 25-cent poker game with neighbors.

Best of all, she doesn't have to live in a nursing home. Instead, she gets daily visits from a longtime friend who makes \$10 an hour from the state to care for her.

She is part of a unique experiment in Vermont. Under the Choices for Care program, older adults who are eligible for Medicaid and need someone to tend to their needs can be cared for at home by a relative, friend or neighbor paid by the state.

"A nursing home? They sit there and moan and holler and sit in a chair and sleep. I don't want that," said Parsons, who has heart and thyroid problems and uses a walker to get around her apartment building.

Experts say the closely watched project could spur dramatic changes in the way the United States handles long-term care for elderly people.

One year after enacting it, Vermont officials say it is reducing the number of people sent to nursing homes, cutting the cost of taxpayer-funded care and improving the quality of life for people such as Parsons.

The nursing-home industry and other critics say subsidized home care by family members and other nonprofessionals is far from a panacea. They say the care isn't as good.

Parsons' former tenant, Penny Walsh, 41, gets paid \$10 an hour for 35 to 40 hours of work a week. She said she took the job of caring for Parsons because she was already doing some of her cleaning and other chores for free.

"It's like seeing my grandmother every day," she said, sitting by Parsons' side during a Monday morning visit.

Previously, Walsh was a clerk and a worker at a day-care center.

Elder-care experts say the Vermont program could help blunt one of the longstanding criticisms of Medicaid -- that it shunts people into institutions without regard to what they really want.

Medicaid, which spent \$38 billion on institutional care last year, wants to shift more toward home care and community-based systems, where "the medical dollars follow the needs of the patient, rather than the other way around," said Mary Kahn, a spokeswoman for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the federal agency that administers the programs.

It costs Vermont about \$122 a day for Medicaid-covered senior citizens who live in nursing homes, compared with about \$80 a day for those being cared for in their homes.

Mary Shriver, executive director of the Vermont Health Care Association, a nursing home trade group, said that in-home care works for some but that it cannot match nursing home care for quality.

"Good intentions can cause some damage sometimes," she said.

Sometimes, good intentions are not enough.

"Typically, a family says, 'Sure, we can do this' and brings their grandparent into the home and starts into the role of caregiving and the state is



Florence Parsons, 93, left, visits with her friend and caregiver Penny Walsh, 41, in her Winooski, Vt., apartment Monday. "It's like seeing my grandmother every day," Walsh says of caring for Parsons, who is holding a photo of Walsh's son, Charlie. Vermont's Choices for Care program makes in-home care as easy to get as nursing home care for Medicaid-eligible seniors. (TOBY TALBOT/Associated Press)

paying them," said J. Churchill Hindes, president of the Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, a nonprofit home health care agency.

"And after a few months or a year, they realize how exhausting the work is, how emotionally draining it might be and just how hard it is."

Parsons' caregiver said the arrangement is working out great so far. Parsons said she likes the company and the help.

"She's been as close as family for a long time," Parsons said of Walsh. "You know what they say: You have to put up with your family, but you choose your friends. I chose her."

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Marquette, November 2

Department Of Human Services Takes A New Approach

The Department of Human Services is taking a new approach to foster care in Michigan. The "Family to Family" program draws on community partnerships along with advice from birth and foster parents in deciding what's best for children.

Research shows that children in foster care who have regular contact with their birth parents and the community in which they are from, have a higher rate of successful reunification with their birth parents. The new program responds to this research by increasing family and community involvement in developing safety and service plans for foster children.

Director of the Marquette department, Julia Hadas, says, "The Department of Human Services is not in it alone. We need the neighbors, the families, we need the friends, we need the schools and we need all of our community partners to help us protect children and raise our children."

The recent community forum was the kick off of bringing the program to every county throughout the state.



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Church sets food giveaway Saturday

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

FLINT TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, November 02, 2006

By George Jaksa

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Members of Life Christian Church will give away food from noon-3 p.m. Saturday at its new location at 3247 Beecher Road, commonly known as the White House. The Rev. Dino Lasala, pastor, said a tent will be erected outside the building for the program to serve area needy.

- George Jaksa

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Ludington Daily News

Posted: 11-1-2006

Warm the Children program offers winter clothes for those in need

The Ludington Daily News' 2006-07 Warm the Children campaign has begun.

With the weather turning colder, people are scurrying to get out their winter coats and boots to prepare for the colder weather ahead. But for low-income families with children, it's not always that easy. That's where the program can help.



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Warm the Children is a cooperative effort between the Ludington Daily News and the community. The newspaper accepts donations and deposits them into a Warm the Children account at a local bank. Families who qualify for help are referred to the program through the Michigan Department of Human Services (formerly the Family Independence Agency). Volunteer shoppers, recruited by the Ludington Daily News, are assigned to a family. They meet at a local store, and each child is allowed up to \$80 worth of warm winter clothes. The stores offer discounts and then bill the Warm the Children fund. The donated money is used for these purchases only; no administrative fees are charged.

"It's really a community-based program", said Michelle Piotrowski, Warm the Children coordinator. "The tax-deductible donations that are received stay here in our own local stores. The volunteers act as neighbors helping neighbors, spend an hour or two shopping with the family, and children are warmer for the winter."

"Besides individual donations, many businesses have fun with it too. Some have raffles, bake sales, casual day donation days, and several church groups made quite substantial offerings."

The monetary donations were excellent last year, Piotrowski said, and the volunteer shoppers pulled the program all together.

"We had about 30 volunteer shoppers, several of whom shopped with several families," she said. "Our goal this year is to have at least 50 shoppers so that we can help even more families in a more timely manner."

How to help

- To make a donation, send it to:

Warm the Children

PO Box 340

Ludington, MI 49431

or stop by 202 N. Rath Ave.

- To be a volunteer shopper, contact:

Michelle Piotrowski

Ludington Daily News

P.O. Box 340

Ludington, MI 49431

845-5181

How to get help

- To find out if your family qualifies for help, contact the Department of Human Services, 915 E. Diana St.

[Post a Comment](#)

Date published: 11-1-2006

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DETROIT FREE PRESS

MICHIGAN

Political notebook

November 2, 2006

More attack ads are airing

The gubernatorial candidates started airing more political attack ads Wednesday. DeVos' ads portray Granholm as weak on welfare reform.

In one claim, DeVos says he would join the Legislature in enacting a four-year limit on welfare benefits. Granholm has refused to go along with strict limits, saying they would harm vulnerable residents.

Granholm's ads once again beat up DeVos for eliminating nearly 1,400 jobs from Amway while he was president of the company and creating thousands of jobs in China at the same time, and ends with: "Dick DeVos has failed us. It's time to say no to Dick DeVos."